

Committee.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The Chair recognizes Senator Robinson.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Madam President, members of the committee, LB 337 is a bill that deals with various sections of law regarding to the initiative and referendum petition process. It arose out of the task force that met this summer and attempts to clean up certain areas regarding petitions. The committee amendment makes a few changes to the bill that we believe warrant consideration by the body. The first change eliminates the requirement that red print be used when placing a statement on the petition stating whether or not the circulator is paid or volunteer. The committee felt that maintaining the current language that requires a contrasting color to be used along with the 16 point type requirement would accomplish the same purpose. Secondly, the bill requires that a petition circulator shall have been registered to vote in Nebraska for three months prior to circulating a petition. The committee amended this from three months to one month. We recognized the importance of putting a barrier in place to prevent a well-financed group from simply importing a large number of people, registering them to vote and having them circulate petitions, but it seemed that three months was probably too long of a time to have to wait. One month will serve as an adequate deterrent against this type of activity. Section 5 of LB 337 deals with a new requirement that the Revisor of Statutes review the text of a proposed initiative or referendum measure for form and draftsmanship. The committee amendment allows the revisor to have 10 days to complete this review instead of five. And it also states that the results of the review shall be kept confidential for five days after receipt by the sponsor, but shall thereafter be deemed to be public information and shall become a part of the official record of the initiative. Lastly, the committee amendment strikes all of the new language regarding the determination of the validity of petition signatures and reinstates the old system. The result of this is to keep the law so the election commissioner or county clerks shall determine whether or not the signers are registered voters and that the signatures and addresses shall presume to be valid but that this presumption may be rebutted by any credible evidence which the election commissioner or county clerk finds sufficient. The committee for the most part feels that the changes proposed in the committee amendment makes a good bill